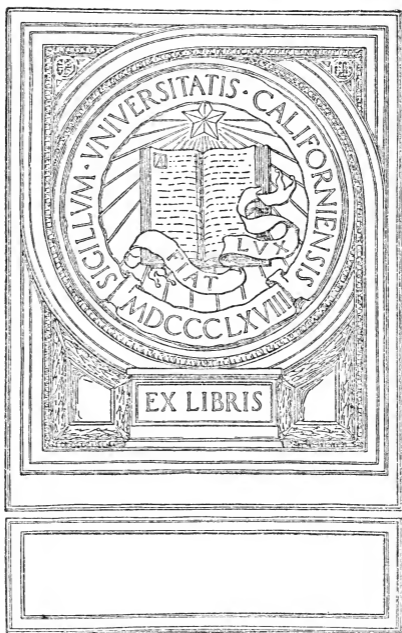


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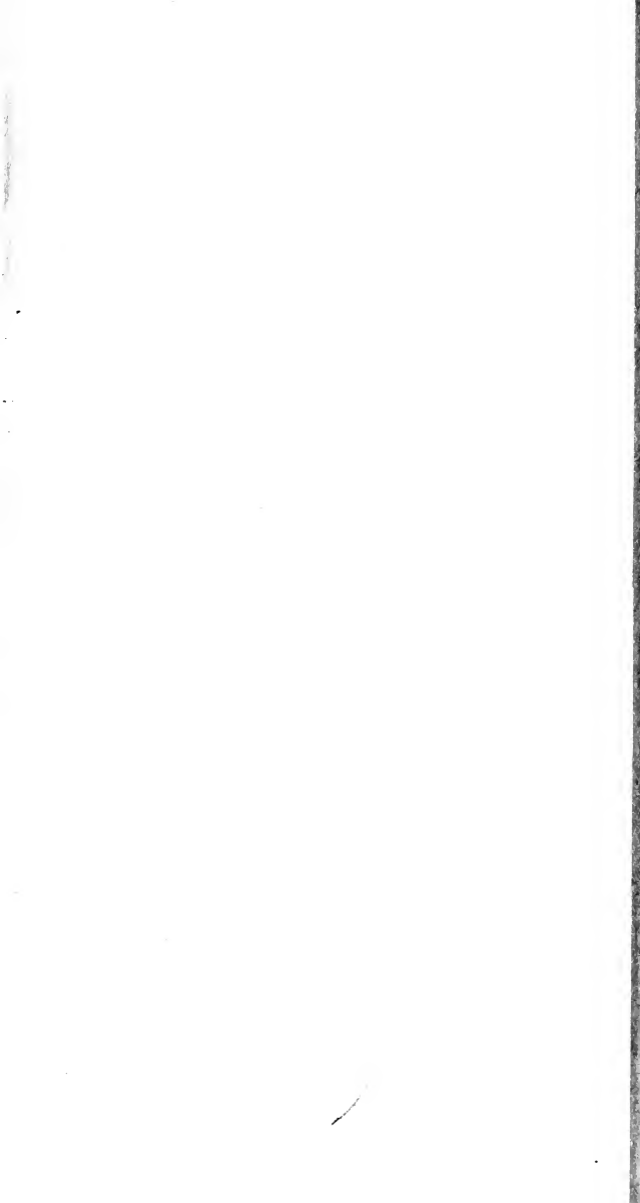
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THE  
**REMEDY FOR DUELLING.**

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A  
**S E R M O N,**

DELIVERED BEFORE  
THE PRESBYTERY OF LONG-ISLAND,  
AT  
THE OPENING OF THEIR SESSION,  
AT AQUEBOGUE,

APRIL 16, 1806.

BY LYMAN BEECHER, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN EAST-HAMPTON.

FIRST PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE PRESBYTERY.

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RE-PUBLISHED BY SUBSCRIPTION.

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TO WHICH IS ANNEXED,  
THE RESOLUTIONS AND ADDRESS  
OF THE  
ANTI-DUELLING ASSOCIATION OF NEW-YORK.

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## RECOMMENDATION.



A DESIGN having been entertained of printing, in a neat form, and at a low price, a large edition of the REV. LYMAN BEECHER's Sermon, entitled "*The Remedy for Duelling*," we embrace this opportunity of bearing our testimony to its excellence, and of recommending it to the serious consideration of every one who regards the public virtue, prosperity, and honour. We are persuaded that no man, over whom cogent reasoning, political rectitude, and religious principle, have not lost their power, can rise up from an impartial perusal of Mr. BEECHER's Sermon, without being convinced that the citizens of these States have neglected an important duty by not resisting, in their individual capacities, the atrocious crime of duelling; and without an anxious desire to see the remedy proposed by Mr. BEECHER put under a course of fair experiment. Should it ultimately succeed, as there is reason to hope it will, the blessing of the present and of future generations will rest on the head and the memory of a man, who, by first pointing out and urging an effectual expedient for effacing one of the foulest blots on our national character, will have pre-eminently deserved well of his country.

JOHN RODGERS, D. D.  
J. H. LIVINGSTON, D. D.  
J. M. MASON, D. D.  
ALEX<sup>R</sup>. Mc LEOD, D. D.

SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.  
JOHN B. ROMEYN, D. D.  
PH. MILLEDOLER, D. D.  
HON. JOHN BROOME.

*New-York, November, 1809.*

## PREFACE.



THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, at their Session of 1805, "having taken into consideration the unhappy prevalence of Duelling in the United States, and being anxiously desirous of contributing what may be in their power, consistently with their character and situation, to discountenance and abolish this practice,

"*Resolved unanimously*, that they do, in the most unequivocal manner, declare their utter abhorrence of the practice of duelling, and of all measures tending thereto, as originating from the malevolent dispositions of the human heart, and a false sense of honour; as a remnant of Gothic barbarism; as implying a presumptuous and highly criminal appeal to God, as the Sovereign Judge; as utterly inconsistent with every just principle of moral conduct; as a direct violation of the sixth commandment, and destructive of the peace and happiness of families. And the Assembly do hereby recommend it to the ministers in their connexion, to discountenance, by all proper means in their power, this scandalous practice.

"*Resolved also*, that it be recommended to all the ministers under the care of the Assembly, that they scrupulously refuse to attend the funeral of any person who shall have fallen in a duel; and that they admit no person, who shall have fought a duel, given or accepted a challenge, or been accessory thereto, unto the distinguishing privileges of the church, until he manifest a just sense of his guilt, and give satisfactory evidence of repentance."

The writer of this discourse had long viewed, with anxiety, the prevalence of duelling in our country, and particularly in this state. He had waited, but had waited in vain, for the interposition of law; and had ceased to expect a remedy, from that source. He had witnessed the facility with which the law could be evaded, and he had learned the cause.

When the above recommendation of the General Assembly to ministers in their connexion, *to discountenance, by all proper means in their power, the scandalous practice of duelling*, came to hand, he was led to inquire whether the evil did really admit a remedy?

what that remedy might be, and in what manner, as an individual, he might exert himself with effect? The ensuing discourse, delivered first to the people of his own charge, and afterwards before the presbytery, is the result of this investigation. The efficacy of the proposed remedy, if applied, he cannot question; and that in the mass of community there is yet remaining a sufficient abhorrence of the crime to effect its extinction, he can no more question. Whether the public mind can be so generally awakened to the subject, and engaged to act with such decision as to counteract the influence of sophistry, political prejudice, and other causes, time alone can determine. The Presbytery, however, were disposed to make the experiment, so far as the distribution of this discourse, seconded by their own efforts and the co-operation of their churches, might have influence; hoping that this small beginning might awaken a more extensive attention to the subject, and issue in a general combination of all good men and real patriots, to cleanse the land from blood.



ISAIAH, LIX. 14, 15.

*And Judgment is turned away backward, and Justice standeth afar off; for Truth is fallen in the streets, and Equity cannot enter.*

THE people of Israel, when this passage was written, had become exceedingly corrupt, and were sinking under the pressure of awful judgments.

But although hardened in sin, they are not insensible to misery; and though regardless of God as their benefactor, they murmur and tremble before him as the author of their calamities.

They admit, indeed, their sin; but suppose that they have made already a sufficient atonement. It is not for sending judgments that they impeach the Almighty, but for continuing them. Not because he is just, but because he hath no mercy. "Wherefore have we fasted, (say they,) and thou seest not—wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge."

The majesty of heaven condescends to reply. He declares their sin to be the cause of his judgments; their hypocrisy and impenitence the ground of their continuance.

The sins which brought down the judgments of heaven, it appears, were national sins. As individuals, the people are guilty, and each has contributed to augment the national stock. But of all classes their rulers and their great men had been the most liberal contributors. Their private characters are abominable. Their public characters are no better. They pervert justice—their feet run to evil—their hands are defiled with blood. Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

The profligate example of rulers has at all times a most pernicious influence. It had in this case. Conspicuous by its elevation and surrounded by the fascinations of honour, it ensnared the young, emboldened the timid, and called hardened villains from their dark retreats. A tremendous scene ensues—a scene of impurity, intrigue, jealousy, violence, and murder. And there is none to help. *All bonds are sundered*—the foundations are destroyed. “None calleth for justice.” The oppressed call not, because they despair of her aid; and the wicked, because too guilty to trust to her decisions.

Doubtless, in the humble walks of life there were many who had escaped the contagion of example, and who, had they been united and courageous, might have set bounds to these evils; but they neglected to make exertion—they were dismayed, and gave up the cause of God without a struggle.

I have no conception that this state of the Jewish nation is in general a correct portrait of our own. But are there no points of resemblance? I allude to such of our rulers and great men as denominate themselves men of honour; and who, despising the laws of their country and their God, adjust with weapons of death their own private quarrels. To such the character ascribed to the Jewish rulers, is affectingly applicable. Their hands are full of blood; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

I allude also to the impunity with which, in a christian land and under the eye of the law, these deeds of violence are committed. With respect to the punishment of *even murder*, committed in a duel, "judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; truth has fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter."

It may be added, that, as among the Jews, the *people*, who by union and exertion might have limited the evils of their day, remained inactive, so the great body of the nation, although they abhor the crime of duelling, remain indolent spectators of the wide-wasting evil.

But it will be demanded, how are we, the common people, to prevent duelling? We have caused laws to be enacted, and severe penalties to be annexed; besides this what can we do? We can rescue these laws from contempt, and insure their prompt execution. Do you inquire how? By withholding your suffrages from every man whose hands are stained with blood, and by intrusting to men of fair character and moral principle the making and execution of your laws.

It will therefore be the object of the ensuing discourse to exhibit and illustrate the reasons that should induce every man to withhold his vote from any person who has fought or aided in fighting a duel. And,

1. The elevation of duellists to power, is an act directly opposed to the precepts of religion.

Civil government is a divine ordinance. The particular form is left to the discretion of men, but the character of rulers God has himself prescribed. They must be *just men*. Such as *fear God—a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well*. Do duellists answer to this description? Are they just men? Do they fear God? Look at their law. It constitutes the party, judge in his own cause, and executor of his own sentence. Its precepts, like those of Draco, are written in blood. Death, or exposure to it, is its lightest penalty, and this with unrelenting severity is inflicted for the most trifling offence, as for the most enormous crime; and as often perhaps upon the innocent as upon the guilty.

When arrested by the fatal challenge, no plea of reverence for God, of respect to human law, of conscience, of innocence, absence of anger, actual friendship, affection to parents, wife or children, the hope of heaven or fear of hell, is for one moment admitted. All obligations are cancelled, all ties are burst asunder, all consequences disregarded. "Nor justice nor mercy may interpose to mitigate the rigors of the controversy. The peaceable must fight the quarrelsome—the rich man, the bankrupt—the father of a family, the libertine—the son of many hopes, the worthless prodigal." It is a law which inculcates no virtue, and which prohibits no crime, if it be *honourably committed*. It tolerates adultery, blasphemy, intemperence, revenge, and murder. THOU SHALT KILL, is its first and great command, and too much conscience to obey is the only unpardonable sin. The obedient subjects of a law so impious, so unmerciful and unjust, God hath denounced as unfit to govern men. They are disfranchised by heaven. But,

2. The duellist is a murderer; and were there no excluding sentence in the word of God, our own abhorrence of the crime should exclude from confidence these men of blood.

"Murder, (says Blackstone,) is committed when a person of sound memory and discretion killeth any reasonable creature in being, with malice aforethought, either express or implied. Express malice is when one with a separate deliberate mind, and formed design, doth kill another. This takes in the case of deliberate duelling, where both parties meet avowedly with an intent to murder." And a greater than Blackstone hath said, "If a man smite his neighbour with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer. And if he smite him with a hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, *and he die*, he is a murderer. And if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by lying of wait that he die, or in enmity smite him with his hand that he die, he that smote him shall surely be put to death, for he is a murderer." The law of this state hath also spoken on this subject, and in

perfect accordance with reason and the word of God, declares the taking of life in a duel to be murder. The appointed punishment of murder is death. God, who defines the crime, has himself specified the penalty. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. The murderer shall surely be put to death. The avenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer. Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer which is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. He shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him."

These denunciations of the word of God are peremptory, and are to this moment in full force. The law violated by the murderer is a moral law. The cancelling of Jewish ceremonies has not affected it. The penalty is the penalty of a moral law, and the obligation to inflict it universal and immutable. Shall we then dare to rise up in the face of heaven, and turn judgment away backward? Shall we snatch from the dungeon and the gallows the victims of justice, to invest them with power and adorn them with dignity and honour?

But every duellist, it will be said, is not a murderer, inasmuch as death is not always the consequence of fighting. The death of the victim is, I know, necessary to justify the infliction of the penalty in its full extent. But is a crime never committed until it becomes so palpable that the law can take hold of it? I hesitate not to say that every duellist is a murderer, for he hath said so himself. He professes as his own, principles of murder; he tells you that if occasion calls, and his skill be sufficient, he will murder. And when insulted or challenged he hath stood forth in the field of combat, aimed the deadly weapon, and through want of skill only, or through fear, has failed to prostrate his victim; is he therefore not a murderer? Is the professed robber who fails in his attempt, therefore not a robber? Is the assassin, because his thrust was not deadly, therefore not an assassin?

3. A regard to our own safety, as well as respect to the authority of God, and an abhorrence of murder, should withhold our suffrage from the duellist.

When we trust life, and liberty, and property, in the hands of men, we desire some pledge of their fidelity. But what pledge can the duellist give? His religious principle is nothing—his moral principle is nothing. His honour is your only security. But is this sufficient? Are the temptations of power so feeble; is the public and private interest so inseparable; are the opportunities of fraud so few, that amid the projects of ambition, the cravings of avarice, and the conflicts of party, there is no need of conscience to guarantee the integrity of rulers? The law of honour, were its maxims obeyed perfectly, would afford no security. “It is a system of rules constructed by people of fashion, and calculated to facilitate their intercourse with one another, and for no other purpose\*.” It is the guardian of honourable men only. The public good is out of the question—right and wrong are terms unknown in this code. Its sole object is to enable unprincipled men to live together with politeness and good humour—Men, whom neither the laws of their country nor the retributions of eternity can restrain from acts of mutual outrage; who, by the expectation of instant death, by the pistol at the breast only, are restrained from unchristian provocation, and drilled into good behaviour. It is for the interest of this *noble portion* of the human race that honour legislates. But for you, the common people, *the ignoble vulgar*, it has no concern.

Hence the honour of a duelling legislator does not restrain him in the least from innumerable crimes, which affect most sensibly the peace of society. He may condemn the Saviour of men, and hate and oppose the religion of his country. He may be a Julian in bitterness, and by swearing cause the earth to mourn.—In passion a whirlwind—in cruelty to tenants, to servants and to his family, a tiger. He may be a gambler, a prodigal, a fornicator, an adulterer, a drunkard, a murderer, and not violate the laws of honour. Nay, honour not only tolerates, but in many instances it is the direct and only temptation to crime.

What has torn yonder wretches from the embraces of

their wives and their children, and hurried them to the field of blood—to the confines of hell? Look! what nerves those arms, rising to sport with life and heaven? It is honour—the pledge of patriotism—the evidence of rectitude! Ah, it is done! The blood streams. The victim welters on the ground. And see, the victor savage running from the field, and hasting to the embraces of his country, to *offer his services*, and to *pledge his honour*, that *your lives and your rights* shall be safe in his hand! Nor is this the only case where honour becomes the temptation to crime; it operates in all cases where the maxims of this infernal combination have attached disgrace to the performance of duty, and honour to the perpetration of iniquity. And beside the crimes which honour tolerates, and the scarcely inferior number which it enjoins, there are a variety of cases where it will not restrain from treacheries confessedly dishonourable.

What security can a mere man of honour give that he will not betray your interest, in every case where it can be done without *detection*? What shall secure you when the price of perfidy is so high as to compensate for the disgrace of an *honourable sale*\*? What, where attachment to the public good would sacrifice popularity? For in this case the more tender his regard to reputation and dread of disgrace, the more certainly will he abandon the public good and pursue his private interest. What also, when he may follow a multitude to do evil, and annihilating his disgrace by dividing it with many? What, when his reputation is already gone, before his term of service or his ability to do mischief expires? What, in those numberless cases where imagined ingratitude on the part of the people shall impel wounded pride to an honourable revenge? What, where the disgrace of poverty, as often happens, is more dreaded than the disgrace of a dishonest act?

\* A prime minister of England, after much experience, said that every man had his price, and applied to men who have no fear of God before them—who have no pledge of rectitude but “What will the world think of me?” I doubt not at all the justice of his opinion.

It is said, I know, that a man's principles and his private character are nothing to us. If his ability be adequate, and his politics correct, and his public conduct as yet irreproachable, this is sufficient. But are you prepared to be the dupes of such wild absurdity? According to this sentiment, a man may set his mouth against the heavens—he may be a drunkard in the intervals of official duty, a prodigal, a tyrant, a mere savage in his family; and still be trumpeted by unprincipled politicians and electioneering handbills, as the great champion of liberty, the very Atlas on whose shoulders rests the destiny of his country.

But what is a man's political creed—what is his past conformity to your wishes, when his profligate private life demonstrates that he is prepared to betray you the first moment he shall find it for his interest? Dispense with moral principle and private virtue, and all is gone. You can find no substitute; honour is a cobweb, and patriotism an empty name, in the hour of trial. The single circumstance that neither the interest nor the reputation of the duellist will come in competition with your interest, is your only security that, if able, he will not sport with your liberties as wantonly as he has sported, or is prepared to sport, with the life of his neighbour.

Admit that there are instances in which men destitute of principle have acted with integrity in public stations; can you tell me *how many thousands have betrayed their trust for want of it?* These are exempt cases. The persons did not happen to be tempted. But do you desire no better pledge of rectitude than the mere absence of temptation?—Will you confide in thieves and swindlers to legislate, because two in a thousand, though utterly unprincipled, have found it for their interest not to cheat you?

It is in trying emergencies, when the price of perfidy is high, and temptation imperious, that unprincipled men are weighed in the balance and found wanting. And will you appoint cowards or traitors to command your armies, because they might answer in time of peace? Or intrust your

lives to quacks in medicine, because, under slight indispositions, they might suffice to administer herb-drink?

Why does this lingering confidence in the duellist still survive the extinction of moral principle? One crime of equal magnitude in any other case, would decide his fate for ever. The failing merchant, convicted of dishonesty, is *recorded* a knave; the receipt of a bribe is irrevocable infamy; perjury cancels for ever all confidence; the thief solicits in vain the public suffrage; the highway robber can find none to exercise charity, none to palliate his crime; and the common murderer, might he live, would be doomed to linger out a life of disgusting infamy. But the duellist, who, in cold blood, or with bitter malice and burning rage, murders his neighbour, can find enough to exercise charity and palliate his crime; a whole state, a whole nation to testify by their votes that they consider it nothing.

But, alas! the duellist, *frail man*, is overcome by temptation. *He* has peculiar sensibilities, habits of education, and modes of thinking, which in this *one case* lead him astray, without inferring at all a general deficiency of principle, religious or moral.

In plain language, because the duellist is *educated* a duellist, the crime of wilful murder in him is very small, and is consistent with religious and moral principle. If men, then, are only educated to thieving, assassination, and robbery—if, by habit and false reasoning, they are so familiarized to crime as to rob, and steal, and destroy life without much consciousness of guilt, *then*, indeed, they are *very honest men*, and are fit to superintend the affairs of the nation.

But were it admitted, did we even know that some one duellist was in fact a man of principle, and overcome by stress of temptation only, would it be proper to confide in him as a legislator? Would you, had his crime been common murder, an act of robbery or perjury, though you knew he had been surprised or thrust into it by powerful temptation? Would it not manifest him, if not unprincipled, at least too feeble and flexible to stand before the nu-

merous and powerful temptations to which his situation would expose him. A coward may be an honest man, but certainly a coward should not be intrusted with the command of armies. Beside this lightly passing over crimes of the deepest dye, I may even say this rewarding them with the profits and honours of the state, confounds in the public mind the distinctions between virtue and vice, and weakens that abhorrence of crime which is the guardian of public morality. Elevate swindlers to office, and who shall guarantee the integrity of the common people? Elevate adulterers, and who punish incontinence? Elevate murderers, and who will be the avengers of blood?

But, waving all moral considerations, what security have we that the duellist will not, if intrusted with our liberties, desert us in the hour of danger? What security can we have, when it is in the power of every factious rival who can shoot strait, to compel him to the field; and by destroying his life, to derange, perhaps to annihilate, our government? What if Washington, in the crisis of our fate, had fallen in a duel? What, if our *Governor*, our *Senators*, our *Judges*, were so infatuated with the madness of honour, that in the moment of peril they could give us no security of their constancy, but that no person would tempt them to hazard their lives and jeopardy their country?

4. The system of duelling is a system of absolute despotism, tending directly and powerfully to the destruction of civil liberty.

A free government is a government of laws, made by the people for the protection of life, property, and reputation. A despotic government is where life and all its blessings are subject to the caprice of an individual. Those maxims and practices, therefore, which remove life, reputation, &c. from under the protection of law, and subject them to the caprice of an individual, are the very essence of despotism.—Nor is it material whether this is done by open violence, or by the application of unlawful motives, which as effectually answer the purpose. Every man

conforming to the laws of his country, has a right to the peaceable enjoyment of life and all its immunities. Nor has any individual a right, directly or indirectly, to interrupt this enjoyment. No man has a right to tempt his neighbour to renounce the protection of law, and much less to punish him with heavy penalties for refusing to do it\*. But this is precisely the despotic privilege which duellists have arrogated to themselves. The man who refuses a challenge, so far as their accursed influence extends, is out-lawed—is branded with infamy, and exposed to perpetual insult. But what has he done? He has feared to offend his God; and under trying temptations, to the contrary, has bowed submissive to the laws of his country! And for this he is punished—substantially punished, in a free country, without trial, without law, in spite of law!

If the despotic principles of duelling, however, terminated in theory, they might excite our compassion as mere distempers of the brain; but their practical influence is powerful and fatal, as inimical to our rights in *fact* as it is in theory, tending directly and powerfully to the destruction of civil liberty. These tendencies, in a few particulars, permit me to notice—And,

(1.) Equal laws are essential to civil liberty, but equal laws are far from satisfying the elevated claims of duellists. That protection which the law affords to them in common with others, they despise. They must have more—a right to decide upon and to redress their own grievances. When we please, (say they,) we will avail ourselves of the law; and when we please we will legislate for ourselves. For the plodding vulgar, the dull forms of law may suffice; but for a reputation so sacred as ours, and for feelings so refined, they are vastly inadequate. Nor shall they restrain our hand from the vindication of our honour, or protect the wretch who shall presume to impeach it. Is this liberty and equality? Are these gentlemen, indeed, so greatly

\* Hence the mere sending of a challenge is punishable by law.

superior to the people? Is their reputation so much more important? Are their feelings so much more sacred? Is pain more painful to them? Must we bear all injuries which the law cannot redress? Must we stifle our resentments, or if we vent them in acts of murder, swing upon the gallows, while they with impunity express their indignation, and satiate with blood their revengeful spirits?

But education, it is said, has inspired these men with sensibilities peculiar to themselves, for which the cold process of law has made no provision. So has the education of the savage given him peculiar feelings, for the gratification of which the dilatory forms of law are equally inadequate. But will you let loose the relentless savage, with tomahawk and scalping-knife, because educational feelings can find no consolation in the regular administration of justice? The feelings for which the law makes no provision, are feelings for which it ought not to provide—ungodly—sensations of haughty pride and relentless revenge; and which, instead of a dispensation for indulgence, deserve the chastisement of scorpions. To reduce such unruly spirits, the law should brandish its glittering sword, and utter all its thunders. Nothing is needful to make legal redress as adequate to them as to us, but habits of self-government. And are they not under the same obligation that we are, to acquire these habits? And if they will not take the trouble to govern their tempers—if they will not encounter that self-denial which the laws of God and man inculcate—if they will be savages in a civilized land, let them be treated as savages. And when they murder, elevate them not to posts of honour, but to the gallows.

(2.) The administration of justice ought, above all things, to be impartial; the rich and the honourable to be equally liable to punishment for their crimes with the poor, and, according to their desert, punished with equal severity. But while duellists bear sway, this can never be. It is a fact in this state, at the present moment, that the man who steals a shilling is more liable to detection, and more sure

to be punished, and to experience a heavy penalty, than the man who, in a duel, murders his neighbour. Is this equal? Shall petty thefts excite our indignation, and be punished with exemplary severity, while murderers, with bold impunity, walk on every side?

(3.) A sacred regard to law is indispensable to the existence of a mild government. In proportion as obedience ceases to be voluntary, and the contempt of law becomes common, must the nerves of government be strengthened, until it approach in essence, if not in name, to a monarchy. We must have protection; and the more numerous and daring the enemy, the more power must be delegated to subdue and control them. That contempt of law, therefore, which is manifested by the duellist, is a blow at the vitals of liberty. It is the more deadly, because, from the genius of our government, the example has a peculiar influence. In despotic governments the example of the legislator may not be so efficacious. Chains, dungeons, racks, and gibbets, may keep the people in their place, although their rulers should give themselves a license to sin. Viewed at such an abject distance, the example loses also much of its influence. But under the mild government of a republic, there is no such immense distance between the rulers and the ruled, and no such terrific restraints to deter from the imitation of their example. To elevate to office, therefore, duellists, those deliberate contemners of law, is to place their example in the most conspicuous point of view, and to clothe it with most woful efficacy to destroy public virtue. Select for your rulers, men of profligate example, who condemn the religion and despise the laws of their country, and they need not conspire to introduce despotism; you will yourselves introduce it—you will flee to it as the damned will to rocks and mountains, to shield you from the operation of more intolerable evils.

(4.) The tendency of duelling to restrain liberty of speech and of the press, is certainly direct and powerful. The people have a right to investigate the conduct of rulers,

and to scrutinize the character of candidates for office; and as the private moral character of a man is the truest index, it becomes them to be particular on this point. But who will speak on this subject? Who will publish, when the duellist stands before him with pistol at the breast? If a few, duellists themselves and mad with ambition, will brave the danger, how many are there who will not? And what aggravates the restraint, the more unprincipled and vile the man, and the greater the need of speaking, the greater the danger of unveiling his enormity; while bent upon promotion, and desperate in his course, he is prepared to seal in death the lip that shall publish his infamy. What should we think of a law that forbade to publish the immoralities of candidates for office—which made death the penalty of transgression, and which produced annually as many deaths as this nefarious system of duelling? We should not endure it a moment. If Congress were to sanction by a law the maxims of duelling, it would produce a revolution. And will you bear encroachments upon liberty from lawless individuals which you would not bear a moment from the government itself? Would you spurn from your confidence legislators who should make such laws; and will you, by your votes, clothe with legislative power, individuals who, in contempt of law, do the same thing?

Nor let any imagine that the influence of this engine of despotism is small; it is powerful already, and is every year becoming more so, as duelling increases; and God only knows where its influence will end. The actual encroachments of Britain, when we first began to resist them, were not one half so alarming as the encroachments of duellists. To have been parallel she must have executed wantonly, without judge or jury, as many as have fallen in duels. What sensations would such conduct have excited? Had it depended on our votes merely, would England have continued to legislate? And shall lawless despots at this day perform what all the fleets and armies of England could not?

(5.) Duelling, in its operation, exposes to additional risk and danger, those who would rise to usefulness and fame in civil life. With what views can a christian parent look to the law as a profession for his son, where, if he rise to fame, he must join the phalanx of murder—or if he refuse, experience their united influence against him? If the road to Albany or to Washington was beset with robbers—if they sacrificed yearly as many as are now slain in duels, could the wretches live unmolested? Their crimes notorious, could they mingle in society? Could they boast of their prowess, and glory in their shame? Could they enjoy your confidence, receive your suffrage, and be elected the guardians of civil liberty?

4. The inconsistency of voting for duellists is most glaring.

To profess attachment to liberty and vote for men whose principles and whose practice are alike hostile to liberty—to contend for equal laws and clothe with legislative power those who despise them—to enact laws, and intrust their execution to men who are the first to break them, is a farce too ridiculous to be acted by freemen. In voting for the duellist, you patronize a criminal whom, in your law, you have doomed to die. With one hand you erect the gallows, and with the other rescue the victim. At one breath declare him unfit to live, and the next constitute him the guardian of your rights. Cancel, I beseech you, the law against duelling—annihilate your criminal code—level to the ground your prisons, and restore to the sweets of society, and embraces of charity, their more innocent victims. Be consistent. If you tolerate one set of villains, tolerate them all. If murder does not stagger your confidence, let it not waver at inferior crimes.

In your prayers, also, you entreat that God would bestow upon you good rulers; and you always pray, in reference to their *moral character*, that they may be *just men, ruling in the fear of God*. But by voting for duellists you demonstrate the hypocrisy of these prayers—for when, by the

providence of God, it is left to your choice whom you will have, you vote for murderers. Unless, therefore, you would continue to mock God, you must cease praying for good men, or you must cease to patronize men of blood.

Do you not pray also for the preservation of liberty and the continuance of national prosperity? And do you not know that good rulers are the instruments of the divine blessing; and that when God would chastise a people, unprincipled rulers are the rod of his anger? When, therefore, the selection of rulers is left to yourselves, will you disregard his chosen instruments of mercy, and expect his blessing? Will you put into his hand the rod of his anger, and expect to escape chastisement?

5. To vote for the duellist is to assist in the prostration of justice, and indirectly to encourage the crime.

Laws in republics depend, for their prompt execution, upon the spirit of the people. The highway robber need not to publish his daring exploits in a newspaper, to attract notice. A common indignation glows in the public mind—in all directions the murderer is pursued, and when arrested and convicted, is sure to die. In several districts of the United States, a murder, committed in a duel, would excite equal exertion to detect the murderer, who, on detection, would be equally sure to die. The great officers of government, and other influential characters, dare not, if disposed, connive at the crime. The public indignation, like a high swollen river, would sweep as a besom of destruction, any one who should presume to turn aside, or obstruct its course. But in this state, the frequency of the crime, and its immemorial impunity, has deadened the public feeling. We disapprove, but we do not sufficiently abhor—we are *sorry*, but we are not indignant—we *wish* the officers of government would execute the law, but we do not *compel* them. Our rulers and great men know perfectly our debilitated state, and are therefore not afraid to contravene our feeble will. It is not a torrent unmanageable and dreadful, but a puny stream which they dare to oppose, and which they have learned to manage:

When, therefore, a murder is committed in a duel, immediately a great bustle is made. The culprit is arrested, *or is to be arrested*—but, alas! he cannot be found; or if found, alas! there are no witnesses—or if there are witnesses, alas! the indictment is defective, and this is the last we hear of it. The first effect of our indignation is a little feared. Justice may not as yet be “turned backward,” without some little manœuvring; and this blustering is made just to amuse, until the first emotion subsides; and when the danger is over, the sword of justice, drawn only to deceive, is returned to its scabbard. The criminal creeps from his hiding place, triumphs in his guilt, and if insulted, fights again. We blame our rulers, but by whom are such men made rulers, and by whose negligence are they emboldened to wink at this most accursed sin? Were the officers of government, from the governor to the justice and grand juror, men of moral principle, who really abhorred duelling and desired to put a stop to it, would the laws be thus inefficacious? Would it be so difficult to make a law that should fasten upon the culprit—so difficult to arrest, convict, and execute? Is there any such difficulty in bringing to justice the thief, the robber, and the common murderer? I tell you, nay. The traitor is in the citadel; we have ourselves put him there, knowing also that he would let the criminal go; of course we are accessory to his escape, and to the prostration of justice, as really as if with our own hands we unbarred and threw open the gates of his prison. Indeed, by removing the only restraints which duellists can feel, we indirectly encourage the crime. By appointing them to legislate, you remove all fear of legal punishment—all fear of pecuniary loss—all fear of disgrace. You say to the aspiring politician, “Be of good courage, and avenge yourself; it shall be no stain upon your character, no impediment to your promotion. We have made a law, indeed, but we mean nothing by it. If you *please* not to destroy your fellow men, we shall be glad; but if you *do* please to destroy them, it shall not have the weight of a straw to prevent your elevation.” By removing, in this way, all

restraints from the commission of the crime, you encourage it, though indirectly, yet really and effectually, as if you rewarded the culprit from the public treasury. Nay, by elevating to important stations men whose hands are stained with blood, you do little less than reward them *for* their crimes; and it has been asserted, and by men long conversant in the affairs of the state, that the fighting of a duel is at this moment a passport to honour.

6. The contempt with which duellists treat the opinions and feelings of the community, is a reason why we should cease to confide in them.

The people, whatever men of honour may think of them, constitute the strength, the virtue, and glory of the nation; and their opinions and wishes demand respect from those who legislate for them. The feelings of the great body of the people are decidedly opposed to duelling. This is manifest from their law on this subject, and from the fact that the mass of the people discard those notions of Gothic honour, resting satisfied with that protection and redress which the law can afford. It is but a handful of men only, compared with the whole, that uphold this bloody system. That which by duellists is denominated public opinion, and which constitutes the dire necessity of spilling each other's blood, is the opinion of duellists only—the opinion of not more than one in a thousand of the inhabitants of the state. But the opinion of this handful is, by those who compose it, deemed of far greater consequence, than the opinion and feelings of the great mass of the people. Duellists well know your aversion to their crimes, your grief at their conduct, and your desires to wipe off this disgrace of a christian land. But little do they care for your opinions or your feelings. They move in a sphere too much above you, to let themselves down to the standard of your conceptions, or to give themselves concern about your petty pains. When an election is depending—when they need your votes to gratify their ambition or satiate their avarice, then indeed they sympathize most tenderly with the people. The people are every thing; their wishes

are sacred, and their voice is the voice of God. But let this end be accomplished, and a challenge or an insult be given, and neither liberty nor patriotism, nor the voice of the people, nor the voice of God, can avail to deter them from deeds the most barbarous and despotic. Will you then vote for men who treat with contempt your opinions and your feelings—who basely prostrate your laws, when you have nothing to bestow; and who again creep through all the dirty windings of hypocrisy, when their promotion depends on your will? What are all their professions of patriotism, contradicted by their conduct? And shall they deceive you still? Let them plead for liberty with the tongue of men and angels, and adore her cause with the fervour of seraphs, they are hypocrites—mere sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

7. Withhold your suffrage from the duellist, and the practice of fighting duels will speedily cease.

Two causes will ensure this effect.

(1.) When duellists are expelled from all legislative influence the law against this crime will be promptly executed. Duelling does not prevail now, because the penalty of law is inadequate, but because it is never inflicted; and so long as duellists retain the confidence of the people, and are clothed with power, it never will be inflicted. We might as reasonably expect horse-jockies, gamblers, and thieves, if intrusted with government, to execute the laws against themselves, as that duellists in office will give efficacy to the law against duelling.

But let men who, in this respect, betray the confidence reposed in them—who not only fight duels themselves, but have pleasure in those that do the same, be driven from their stations, and their places supplied with men of firmness and principle, and the end is accomplished. The penalties of the law, uniformly and faithfully applied, will prevent duelling; and to ensure this, nothing is necessary but to expel traitors, and substitute rulers of a decided character—men who, partaking of the public sentiment, will attempt in earnest to give to that sentiment, as expressed in the law, its entire efficacy.

(2.) The withholding our suffrage from duellists, will tend to annihilate the practice, by arraying the public opinion against it in such a manner, that the real unavoidable disgrace of fighting, will be greater than that of refusing to fight.

The reason why men of honour, (falsely so called,) pay homage to the law of honour, is because the maxims of this ghastly code are, among a certain class of men, assumed as their opinion; which opinion is made to affect, in a sensible manner, those who presume to disregard it. The opinion of the great mass of the people is also just as well known; but with this important difference, that it inflicts no penalty on those who disregard it. It is vague, feeble, and inefficacious. But let the opinion of society, on the subject of duelling, be collected, combined, and expressed in the votes of the people, and it will operate most sensibly upon that class of men who now most despise it. It will involve a penalty which they cannot but feel, and which they evade. No defect in the law—no absconding of witnesses—no flaw in the indictment—no connivance of the great, can come to their assistance in this dilemma. If they will violate our laws, they shall not be intrusted with power. If they will murder, we will invest with power men who will punish them. In this way we cut the sinews of duelling, and bind to good behaviour by the motive which before impelled to the crime. The opinion of the people, that which is in fact public opinion, becomes prominent, assumes influence, and overwhelms the absurd opinions of bloody men.

Motives of compassion, and of justice, both demand this expression of the public mind. These *honourable men* admit the sin and the folly of their deeds. They disclaim all motives of revenge or hatred. Their only plea is necessity; and the only necessity is the imperious mandate of public opinion. They even lament such a state of things should exist; but while it does exist they must fight or encounter disgrace. Is it not our duty to undeceive these deluded men—to rescue from death the reluctant martyrs of honour? Must they be haunted all their days, and be driven to des-

peration, by a mere spectre of the imagination—by a public opinion which has no being? Are we not bound to teach them their *mistake*, if it be such—to wrest from their hands this *mere pretence*, if it be no more?

8. Withholding the public suffrage from duellists is the only method in which there is the least prospect of arresting the practice of duelling.

We may reason, and ridicule, and lament, and remonstrate, and threaten, and legislate, and multiply penalties, and the evil will still progress. Environed by the subtleties of law, and shielded by the perverted patronage of men in office, regardless of your grief, and fearless of your indignation, they will laugh at your zeal and defy your efforts. There is no way to deal with these men but to make them feel their dependence on the people, and no way to effect this but to take the punishment of their crimes into our own hands. Our conscience must be the judge, and we must ourselves convict, and fine, and disgrace them at the polls. Here, and no where beside, will our voice be heard, and our will become law.

9. The evils justly to be apprehended from the continuance of duelling, call loudly upon us to awake in earnest to this subject, and apply with vigour the proposed remedy.

It every year robs our country of men qualified, (this epidemic madness excepted,) for extensive usefulness. It cuts down our young men, and fills the land with widows and with orphans. The tax is too heavy; the victims offered to Moloch are too numerous. Might the evil, however, be confined to its present limits, it would be less intolerable; but we have no ground to indulge such a hope.

In Europe, where duelling originated, the great inequality of rank has prevented usually the practice from descending to the common walks of life. It is there the unenvied privilege of great men to kill one another. But in our own country there is no such barrier. The genius of our government has inspired every man with a spirit of independence and self-importance—a spirit desirable, when duly regulated, but dreadful when perverted; and in young

men, especially, very liable to be perverted. We are all honourable men; and if the laws of the land are insufficient to protect the reputation of one man, they are equally defective to all. If the military officer, the civil officer, and the lawyer, must take the protection of their reputation into their own hands, so may the merchant, the merchant's clerk, the gentleman, and the gentleman's son; so may the mechanic, the farmer, and the planter. And they not only may, but they will do it, if an end be not put to this lawless practice. The horrid evil will not be confined to cities; it will break out in the country. It will stalk through our towns, and desolate our villages. Let not these anticipations be deemed chimerical; they are legitimate inferences from the known principles of the human mind, and the peculiar situation of our country; and they are justified also by experience. The mad example of Charles V. and Francis I. king of France, descended like a mighty torrent from the highest elevations of rank, down to the humble vale of private life. Through all Europe the pulse of honour began to throb, and all orders of men caught the fever. The nobleman, and the nobleman's servant; the general, and the common soldier; the lawyer, the merchant, the tailor, and the hair-dresser, became suddenly inflated with the inspirations of honour. The forms of law were disregarded—every man became his own judge, his own protector and avenger, until in this crusade of honour, the earth smoked with the blood of its miserable inhabitants. “Much of the best blood in christendom was shed; many useful lives sacrificed, and, at some periods, war itself hath hardly been more destructive, than these private contests of honour\*.”

In our own country, and by a similar infatuation, duelling is steadily progressing; the example of great men and rulers is sweeping all before it, and is bending its destroying course to the vale of common life. Several instances have come recently to my knowledge, of challenges given by those whom our grandfathers would have called boys,

\* Modern Europe.

to adjust by weapons of death their hasty disputes. Already, and far remote from cities, does the vapour of honour begin to swell, with fancied importance, many a stripling—leading him to threaten what as yet he has not courage to perform. This shows what effect the frequency of the crime, and the impunity attending it, is beginning to have upon youthful minds. The heaven has begun to operate; and if no stop be put to it, the time is not distant when every petty quarrel of hot-headed young men, must be adjusted by powder and ball. In the southern and western states such events are already frequent. The youth extensively are enrolled on the list of honour, and are bound to attack and defend according to its rules. Expertness in firing the pistol is a qualification of indispensable attainment, and the sabbath is often devoted to the most christian employment of learning to shoot expertly.

The genius of our government favours, also, not only the descent of the practice, but it multiplies exceedingly, and to an unlimited extent, the occasions of duelling. Political disputes are the usual provocation. These display their influence through every grade of society. As our country populates, and increases in wealth, luxury, and vice; as parties multiply and become ardent, these controversies will naturally become more keen and vindictive, until duelling, in spite of us, will become a common alternative; until elections will turn often, not on the merits of the candidate, but on his superior skill in aiming the pistol to destroy his competitor. Already, in certain parts of the union, I have been assured that duelling is not an unknown expedient to secure an election, by removing out of the way a rival candidate. Indeed, in the city of New-York, and in a public paper, it has been declared that at a certain period there was a systematic scheme formed to take off, by duelling, certain leading characters, who were likely to impede the projects at that time in contemplation. The fact asserted is in itself by no means incredible—it is a natural consequence of duelling; just what might be expected—and the duels which took place about that time, and the characters engaged, clothe the subject with an air of high probability.

Nor are the immediate effects of duelling the only consequences to be dreaded. The impunity attending the crime, the confidence reposed in duellists, and the honours bestowed upon them, contribute to diminish in the public mind, the guilt of crimes generally. There is a relationship in crimes which renders familiarity with one, a harbinger to familiarity with another. The wretch who has destroyed two or three fellow-creatures in a duel, will feel little compunction at any crime. Nor can the moral sensibilities of a people familiarized to murder in duels, and accustomed to look upon criminals of this description with confidence and respect, be preserved in full strength in reference to other crimes. Duelling, therefore, while it destroys directly its thousands, destroys by its depraving influence its tens of thousands. I would, therefore, again urge an immediate and vigorous exertion to suppress this evil,

10. From the consideration that the present is perhaps the only time.

The practice of duelling is rapidly progressing—disseminating its infection, and deadening the public sensibility. The effect already is great and alarming. If not, why does the crime shrink before the stern justice of New-England, and rear its guilty head in New-York, and stalk with bolder front as you pass onward to the south? If the effect is not great, why this distinction in crimes of the same grade—why so alive to the guilt of robbery, assassination, and murder of one kind, and so dead to the guilt of duelling? If the effect of duelling upon the public mind is not great, why is it that murder can be committed in open day? the crime notorious, nay, detailed in the newspaper, and the murderer remain unmolested in his dwelling? Why does he not flee? Why is he not advertised? Why are not rewards offered by those authorized by the laws, and expresses hastened in all directions, to arrest and bring to justice the guilty fugitive? Because no one is enough shocked at his crime to make these arrangements. Because, if such measures were taken, the public mind would awake from its

torpor—duelling would become a disgraceful crime, and the criminal would be lost to himself and to his country. He could neither be *Governor*, nor *Senator*, nor *Judge*. He would be exiled from public favour, immured in a dungeon, transported to the gallows, and launched into eternity. If the prevalence of duelling has not, and to an awful degree, affected the public mind, why such a number of half-apologists for the crime; and how can we so patiently hear and candidly weigh, and almost admit their arguments? Could you hear, with equal patience, assassination justified, though (as it well might be) by arguments equally conclusive?—Why is it, if this deadly evil has not already palsied the feelings of the community, that even the members of our churches have heretofore, with so little hesitation, voted for men of blood? Is christianity compatible with murder? Can you patronize the murderer by granting him your suffrage, and not become a partaker in his sin? Admit as the mildest, and as in general the true construction, that this has been done by christians ignorantly, not knowing often that those for whom they voted were duellists, or inconsiderately not realizing the enormity of the crime—why did they not know—why did they not consider? The reason is obvious—

“Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,

“As to be hated needs but to be seen;

“Yet, seen too oft, familiar with her face,

“We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

This is precisely our alarming state. We have sunk through all these grades of moral degradation. We endure, we pity, we embrace murderers. And what will be next? A total apathy to crime.

What is done, therefore, must be done quickly.—Let the maxims of duelling once break out, and spread in the country, and infect the rising generation; let the just abhorrence of the community be a little more effaced by the growing frequency of the crime, and we are undone. There is no place to make a stand. Our liberties are gone—our hands are brass, and our fetters iron—no man’s life is safe—

the laws of the land are a nullity—every man must tremble, and walk softly, and speak softly; lest he implicate his neighbour's honour, and jeopardy his own life. Duelling will become as common, as irremediable, and as little thought of, as assassination is in Spain, in Italy, in South-America.

Then, indeed, will the descriptions of the prophet be horribly realized. "Judgment will be turned away backward"—justice will stand afar off—truth will fail in the streets, "and equity be unable to enter. Yea, truth will fail, and he that departeth from evil, will make himself a prey." None will call for justice—Revenge and murder will be the order of the day. "We shall grope for the wall as the blind—we shall stumble at noon day, as in the night—we shall be in desolate places as dead men!"

Can you sit and calmly await the approach of these evils? Will you bow your necks to the yoke? Will you thrust your hands into the manacles preparing for them? What if these evils may not be realized in your day—have you no regard to posterity? What if never, every man, woman and child will fall in a duel—is there nought to be dreaded in the sword, or pestilence, or famine, because they do not extirpate our race?

11. The facility with which this evil may be suppressed in the way proposed, will render us for ever inexcusable—will constitute us partakers in the sin, if we do not make the attempt.

There are, indeed, many duellists in our land, and many half-apologists for the crime, from whom no aid is to be expected. There are many, too unprincipled, and others too indolent, to be engaged by considerations of duty: and there are some, and even professors of religion, whose strong party prejudices, and political attachments to such men, will be liable to steel them against conviction, or impel them to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. But after all these deductions, there are yet remaining multitudes, thousands and thousands, whose abhorrence of duelling, though diminished by the frequency of the crime, is still sufficient to overwhelm its abettors with infamy.—

Nothing is necessary to awaken and embody in one formidable phalanx of opposition, a vast majority of the state, the great mass of our plain and honest people, but to place the crime in its horrid aspect, and fearful connexions, full before them. Only let them see, and they will feel—Let them feel, and they will act—will hurl indignant every duellist whom they have elevated, from his eminence, and consign to merited infamy every one who shall solicit their favour. Nor is it impracticable thus to exhibit the subject. Ministers of different denominations, all united, would be able to effect it perfectly. Let each, in his appointed sphere, make due exertion to enlighten his flock, and the fire of indignation will soon begin to blaze through all the state. And if beside such exertions further efforts should be needful, the newspaper, the magazine, and the distribution of small tracts on the subject, may be enlisted as auxiliaries.

Nor can any reasonably object to such conduct on the part of ministers; nor will any one probably attempt it, who does not for himself or some favourite, fear the consequences. Our obligations are most solemn to lift up our voice, and to put forth our exertions against this sin. Our God calls to us from heaven—The damned call to us from hell—The blood of murdered victims, from the ground lifts up its voice, and mingles with the cry of the widow and the fatherless—the prophets, by their example; our saviour, by his; and the apostles by theirs, forbid us to be silent, or inactive.

It is in vain to cry out “priest-craft”—or “political preaching.” These watch-words will not answer here. The crime we oppose is peculiar to no party; it is common to all. It is a crime too horrid to be palliated; too threatening, to be longer endured in officers of government. Any political effect of such exertion on our part, will be a consequence merely, and not the object of our exertions; small also and momentary: and were it to be great, it would not be our fault, or alter the course of our duty. If we may not denounce duelling, because men of political eminence are guilty of the crime; because the enlightening of your

consciences would affect an election; every crime, will soon find a sanctuary, in the example of some great politician. Our mouths will be shut—we may not whisper the guilt of crimes; lest, awakening your consciences, it should produce some political effect.

It is practicable then, and it is the duty of ministers, to awaken the attention of their people, and arouse their just indignation, against criminals of this description. Nor will it be difficult for the people, once awake and engaged, to effect their purpose.

If only the members of christian churches become decided in their opposition to duelling, it will produce a sensation through the state. The votes of professing Christians, of different denominations, are too numerous and important to be thrown away. And will not the churches awake? Will professors of religion, a religion commanding, “Love your enemies,” and breathing “peace on earth, good will to man;” uphold deliberately, and encourage by their suffrage, the practice of duelling? On this ground only, a formidable stand may be made.

But the churches will not be left to stand alone. In every district of the state, there are multitudes both conscientious and patriotic, whose zealous co-operation may be expected. Voluntary associations may take place; correspondences be established; and a concert of action formed. Representatives may be chosen in reference to this thing; as they have often been for points of far less moment. And from such a legislature, may emanate a council of appointment, breathing the spirit of the people; and prepared with stern justice to exclude from the honours and profits of office, those who now, by connivance and artifice, evade the law: and even should the contest be more arduous. If, in the tempest of an election, all these arrangements should seem to be swept away; and religion, and conscience, and patriotism, to be lost in the delirium of passion; are there not in every church, and in every congregation, a chosen few, who would brave the storm? Whom no sophistry could deceive—no influence bend, and

do passion move from their purpose? Are there not in every parish, at least ten righteous persons, to avert the curse of heaven and commence a reformation? But ten persons, in every congregation in the state, would constitute a weight of influence ultimately decisive. In a government like ours, where a state is often almost equally divided, a few thousand votes are too precious to be lost. When, therefore, it comes once to be known that the fighting of a duel is a serious blot upon the character of a candidate; and that in every district and in every town, there are considerate and conscientious people who will not vote for him; parties will not risk their cause upon the shoulders of such men. Duellists will become unpopular candidates, and such men will be selected as shall merit, and insure your suffrage.

Even the county of Suffolk, is able, if disposed, to throw into the scales an important weight of influence against duelling. It is one of the oldest counties in the state—extensive, populous, united, and distinguished by its veneration for religion, its strong attachment to liberty, and the honest and peaceable deportment of its inhabitants. It embraces few, if any duellists, or friends of duelling. Ministers, magistrates, and people, all, it is presumed, think alike on this subject. And beside these advantages, it has often, in contested elections, been looked to, and may often again be, as holding in some measure the balance of the state. With these advantages, it may speak and be heard. Let it be known that even one county will not uphold despotism and murder, and the names of DESPOTS and MURDERERS will no longer disgrace your tickets of suffrage. The fighting of a duel will become a disgrace, a millstone about the neck of aspiring ambition.

You have often lamented the prevalence of duelling, but have not known how, as individuals, to do any thing to arrest the evil. Now, you perceive what you can do. The remedy is before you. It is simple, and easy, and certain. And if you do not apply it; if you continue to vote for duellists, and thus to uphold the crime; you are partakers in

the sin, and accountable for all the evils which will ensue, and which you may now so easily prevent.

Finally, the appointment of duellists to office, will justly incense the Most High, and assuredly call down the judgments of heaven.

Duelling is a great national sin. With the exception of a small section of the union, the whole land is defiled with blood. From the lakes of the north, to the plains of Georgia, is heard the voice of lamentation and wo; the cries of the widow and the fatherless. This work of desolation is performed often by men in office; by the appointed guardians of life and liberty. On the floor of Congress, challenges have been threatened if not actually given, and thus powder and ball have been introduced, the auxiliaries of deliberation and argument. Oh, tell it not in Gath—publish it not in the streets of Askelon! Alas! it is too late to conceal our infamy. The sun hath shined on our guilt, and the eye of God with brighter beams surveyed the whole. He hath surveyed, and he will punish. His quiver is full of arrows, his sword impatient of confinement. Ten thousand plagues stand ready to execute his wrath. Conflagration, tempest, earthquake, war, famine, and pestilence, wait his command only, to cleanse the land from blood; to involve in one common ruin, both the murderer and those who tolerate his crimes. Atheists may scoff; but there is a God; a God who governs—an avenger of crimes—the supporter and the destroyer of nations. And as clay in the hand of the potter, so are the nations in the hand of God. At what instant he speaks concerning a nation, to pluck up, to pull down, and destroy it; if that nation repent, God will avert the impending judgment. And at what instant he shall speak concerning a nation, to build, and to plant it; if it do evil in his sight, he will arrest the intended blessing, and send forth judgments in its stead. Be not deceived—The greater our present mercies and seeming security, the greater is the guilt of our rebellion, and the more certain, swift, and awful, will be our calamity. We are murderers, a nation of murderers, while we tolerate and reward the perpe-

trators of the crime. And shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

But it will be said, especially in cases of contested elections, if you refuse to vote for this man, though a duellist, his opponent, a worse man, will come in.

A worse man cannot come in. The duellist is a murderer; and is a man's difference from you in political opinion, more criminal than murder? And will you vote for a murderer, a despot, proud, haughty, and revengeful, to keep out another man, perhaps equally qualified, and of a fair fame, merely because he thinks not in politics exactly as you do? To what will such bigotry lead? There will soon be no crime too gross to be overlooked by party men; and no criminal too loathsome and desperate, to float into office on the tide of party. When the violence of competition rises so high in our country, as to lead parties, in their struggles for victory, to tread down the laws of God, disregarding entirely the moral characters of candidates for office; if their being on our side, will sanctify their crimes, and push them into office, reeking in blood; the time is not distant when we shall have no liberties to protect.—Such a people are too wicked to be free, and God will curse them by leaving them to eat of the fruit of their way.

But suppose the opponent of the duellist, beside his political heresy, to be a bad man also, and guilty of the same crime: if I do not vote for the man on my side in politics, will not this be helping his antagonist—and will not this be as bad as if I voted directly? No. You are accountable for your own conduct only. If other people put into office a bad man whom you could not keep out by voting for one equally bad, for their conduct you are not accountable. It is certainly different, whether a vile man comes into power *by* your agency directly, or whether he comes in, in *spite* of you.

But suppose the duellist in all respects, excepting this crime, is a better man than his opponent; of two evils may we not choose the least? Yes, of two natural evils you may.

If you must lose a finger or an arm, cut off the finger. But of two sinful things, you may choose neither—and therefore, you may not vote for one bad man, a murderer, to keep out another bad man, though even a worse one. It is to do evil, that good may come; and of all who do this the apostle declares, “their damnation is just.” What must we do then, in those cases where the character of the candidates are such, as that it would be sinful to vote for either of them? Vote for neither, and the next time you will not be insulted by such candidates for suffrage. Let those who stand behind the curtain, and move the springs, know that you have consciences, and that you will be guided by them, and they will take care that you shall not be compelled to throw away your votes.

But perhaps the liberties of our country are at stake. Might we not for once, and for such an object, vote for a duellist? The same song has been sung at every election this twenty years, and by each party. It is an electioneering trick, to excite your fears, to awaken your prejudices, to inflame your passions, to overpower your consciences, and get your vote, whether right or wrong.

But suppose your liberties are in danger. If they are so far gone, as to depend on the election of one man, and that man a tyrant, a murderer—they are gone irretrievably. Beside the absurdity of appointing a *murderer* to protect life; and a *despot*, to protect liberty; it is to be remembered, that God is our only efficient protector. Men, are merely instruments. But will God bless such instruments, selected in contempt of his authority, and rescued from the sword of his justice? All attempts to avert perdition, by means at war with the precepts of heaven, will prove abortive. You hatch the cockatrice egg, and weave the web of the spider. If your liberties are in danger, reform, pray, and call to your aid men of rectitude: men of clean hands, whose counsels God may be expected to bless.

“But it is difficult to know in all cases who are good men.” True; and will you therefore vote for those, whom you perfectly know to be bad men? Rather discard

those whom you know to be bad, and scrutinize critically the characters of those who profess to be good, and after your utmost care you will be sufficiently exposed to deception.

But the reply is ever at hand, "If they will fight, let them fight and kill each other: the sooner we get rid of them the better." And are you prepared to intrust your lives and all dear to you, to such men? To men whom you confess to be a nuisance, and whose death would be a public blessing? Beside, there is no such thing as killing all. The example of the duellist is a wide-spreading contagion. Every duel that is fought, inspires twenty, perhaps an hundred, with the same accursed frenzy; and the blood of duellists is the seed of duelling, as really as the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church.

"But why so inveterate against duelling in particular?" Because at present it is a great and alarming national sin. Because no other crime, with such shameless effrontery, bids defiance to the laws of God and man. Because no other crime is so palliated, justified, and with such impunity sanctioned by the example of the great; and of course no other crime has so alarming an aspect upon the principles of our young men, and the moral sensibilities of our country. I may add, no other description of criminals, if they escape with impunity, may publish their crimes, glory in their shame, and still be rewarded with the confidence and honours of their country. The crisis is an awful one; and this apathy to a crime of the deepest dye, is a prelude of approaching death. But though there is a peculiar reason for attempting to arouse the listless attention of the public to this sin, there are *decisive objections* to the appointment to office of any immoral man. The prodigal, the drunkard, the prophane, the sabbath-breaker, the adulterer, the gambler, are all disqualified to act as legislators: and no man with an enlightened, and a good conscience, can vote for them.

"But if we are so critical in our scrutiny of character, we shall never be able to find men duly qualified to man-

age our affairs." Most humiliating confession! But how has it come to pass (if true) that so many public characters are immoral men? It is because we, the people, have not even requested them to behave better. We have never made it necessary for them to be moral. We have told them, and we have told our youth, who are rising to active life, that private character is a useless thing, as it respects the attainment of our suffrage. We have told them that, if they pleased, they might associate for drunkenness and midnight revelry: pour contempt upon the institutions of religion; neglect the worship of God, and spend the sabbath in gambling and intemperance, and still be esteemed hallowed patriots! If it is so, that a strict scrutiny of character would exile from office many who now fill public stations; it is our *criminal negligence*, that hath brought this to pass. But the inference, that setting up moral character as a test, would leave us destitute of proper candidates, is groundless. It is the very way to multiply them. Let it once be made known by the freemen that a fair private character is indispensable to the attainment of their suffrage, and reformations will take place. And beside this, our young men will be growing up to habits of virtue under the guardian influence of this restraint. At first, you may encounter a little self-denial, by dismissing men of irregular lives, in whom you have been accustomed to confide. But their places will soon be supplied by an host of men of fair fame, and better qualified to serve their country.

But, allowing that a proper exercise of suffrage would restrain from the practice of fighting duels, all actually concerned, or expecting to be concerned, in civil life: how should this reclaim those who have no such expectation, and are no way affected by the votes of the people? How restrain military and naval officers—men usually the most addicted to the crime?

*Ans.* 1. The prospect of success, though an encouragement, is not the chief ground of obligation to withhold our votes from duellists. It is sinful to vote for them, even though withholding would not reclaim an individual.

2. If the method proposed would reclaim even men immediately concerned in government, or expecting to be, the good effect would be great.—Laws do much good, although they do not entirely extinguish crimes.

3. The example of men in civil life, subtracted from the support of this crime, and arrayed against it, would render the practice dishonourable, among gentlemen of every description. Military officers are citizens as well as officers; and that conduct which is deemed disgraceful by gentlemen in civil life, will soon be felt to be such, and will be abandoned by military and naval officers. And were such an effect less certain, it might be made certain, by the exercise of that discretion which the civil ruler possesses in the appointment of officers. Let our legislators cease to fight duels, and desire to extinguish the practice of duelling, and they would soon fill the army and the navy with men to command, who would be disposed, and able to second their views.

And now let me ask you solemnly; with these considerations in view, will you persist in your attachment to these guilty men? Will you any longer, either deliberately or thoughtlessly, vote for them? Will you renounce allegiance to your maker, and cast the bible behind your back? Will you confide in men void of the fear of God and destitute of moral principle? Will you intrust *life* to MURDERERS—*liberty* to DESPOTS? Are you patriots, and will you constitute those legislators who despise you, and despise equal laws, and wage war with the eternal principles of justice? Are you christians, and by upholding duellists will you deluge the land with blood, and fill it with widows and with orphans? Will you aid in the prostration of justice—in the escape of criminals—in the extinction of liberty? Will you place in the chair of state—in the senate—on the bench of justice, or in the assembly, men who, if able, would murder you for speaking truth? Shall your elections turn on expert shooting, and your deliberative bodies become an host of armed men? Will you destroy public morality by tolerating, yea, rewarding, the most infamous crimes? Will

you teach your children that there is no guilt in murder?—Will you instruct them to think lightly of duelling; and train them up to destroy or be destroyed in the bloody field? Will you bestow your suffrage, when you know that by withholding it you may arrest this deadly evil—when this too is the only way in which it can be done, and when the present is perhaps the only period in which resistance can avail—when the remedy is so easy, so entirely in your power; and when God, if you do not punish these guilty men, will most inevitably punish you?

If the widows and the orphans, which this wasting evil has created and is yearly multiplying, might all stand before you, could you witness their tears; listen to their details of anguish? Should they point to the murderers of their fathers, their husbands, and their children, and lift up their voice and implore your aid to arrest an evil which had made them desolate—could you disregard their cry? Before their eyes could you approach the poll and patronize by your vote the destroyers of their peace? Had you beheld a dying father, conveyed bleeding and agonizing to his distracted family; had you heard their piercing shrieks, and witnessed their frantic agony—would you reward the savage man who had plunged them in distress? Had the duellist destroyed your neighbour—had your own father been killed by the man who solicits your suffrage—had your son been brought to your door, pale in death, and weltering in blood, laid low by his hand—would you then think the crime a small one? Would you honour with your confidence, and elevate to power by your vote, the guilty monster? And what would you think of your neighbours, if, regardless of your agony, they should reward him? And yet, such scenes of unutterable anguish, are multiplied every year. Every year the duellist is cutting down the neighbour of somebody. Every year, and many times in the year, a father is brought dead or dying to his family, or a son laid breathless at the feet of his parents. And every year you are patronizing, by your votes, the men who commit these crimes, and looking with cold indifference upon, and even mocking the sorrows

of your neighbour.—Beware—I admonish you solemnly to beware, and especially such of you as have promising sons preparing for active life, lest, having no feeling for the sorrows of another, you be called to weep for your own sorrow ; lest your sons fall by the hand of the very murderer you vote for, or by the hand of some one whom his example has trained to the work of blood.

With such considerations before you, why, in the name of heaven, do you wish to vote for such men? What have they done for you—what can they do, that better men cannot as happily accomplish? And will you incur all this guilt and hazard all these consequences for nothing? Have you no religion—no conscience—no love to your country? No attachment to liberty—no humanity—no sympathy—no regard to your own welfare in this life ; and no fear of consequences in the life to come?

Oh, my countrymen, awake! Awake to crimes which are your disgrace—to miseries which know not a limit—to judgments which will make you desolate.

I shall close, by an address to professing Christians of all denominations.

My brethren, for what purpose are you placed in this world? Why do you sustain the character, and enjoy the privileges, and anticipate the rewards of the children of God? Is it that you may stand idle spectators of the sins and miseries of mankind. “ Holy and beloved,” have you no “ bowels of compassion?” And are tears, and sympathy, and prayers, the only labour of love which can be rendered, and which you are bound to bestow, to limit the prevalence of crimes, and mitigate the miseries of man? Is no intelligence to be exercised? Are no plans to be adopted? Is no concert of influence and labour to exist among those who are denominated the light of the world and the salt of the earth? Can the world be enlightened and the earth preserved, while Christians whirl away life in noise and bustle, or dose away their days in sloth? Or, divided and subdivided, exert the little influence they possess in watching one the other, and counteracting each other’s designs?

Is there no common enemy to combat? and are there not points enough of common interest and common sentiment, to unite us in one great and vigorous attack?

Too long has the world polluted us by its maxims, and occupied us in its worldly schemes. It is high time to awake out of sleep; and, waving things in which we do not agree, to contribute our whole influence to promote those great objects in which we are all united.

It is the gospel which must heal the nations; and the more the spirit of the gospel can be diffused, and be made to express itself in the arrangement of society, the more will the world recover from its deadly wound. But, brethren, by our indolence and our divisions, we have lost that influence to bless the world which we might have had, and which we are bound to exert, and for the loss of which we must give account to God. "Divide and conquer," has ever been the maxim of the Devil in warring against the saints. *He* avails himself fully of the influence of *his* servants. The influence of the world is always equal to its numbers. It is Christ only who has cause to complain, "why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" It is Christians alone who throw away their influence.

While this state of things remains, the church will continue feeble, and the world miserable. It is by concert only that she can become terrible as an army with banners.

Who then is on the Lord's side? Arise and stand forth, my brethren, as one man. The object to which your attention is called in this discourse, is one in which you can all unite, and in which, by solemn obligations, you are bound to unite.

The laws of God and man are violated. The spirit of the gospel is supplanted by the haughty and ferocious spirit of Devils. For years, it hath carried desolation in its course: and for years, we have suffered the devouring scourge to pass through our land unobstructed; have even facilitated its progress, and multiplied its evils, by bestowing our suffrage upon the authors of our calamity. The God of heaven is offended. His ears are open to the cry of

blood—and his judgments have come down, and his wrath has begun to wax hot against us. Nations shall be punished in this world; they have no existence in the other, and whatever precautions you may use, repentance and reformation can alone avert the chastising rod. So long as you concur with the world in tolerating the duellist, “your hands are full of blood.” “Wash you then, my brethren, and make you clean.” Have mercy upon the nation, and “put away the evil of your doings—cease to do evil, learn to do well—seek judgment—relieve the oppressed—judge the fatherless—plead for the widow.” But if you persist in your neglect of duty, and rebel, remember that the retribution of nations will not supersede the condemnation of individuals. The time draws near, when all of you must die and stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and give an account of all that you have done which you ought not, and of all you have neglected to do, which you ought to have done. Inquisition will be made for blood; and wo to the man whose hands are stained with it! and wo to him, who, by helping the wicked, shall be found to have tempted his God!

Could all the miserable men whom you might have reclaimed by due exertion, but whom you will have encouraged to sin, stand around your dying bed with their weapons of death, could you look upon them with complacency; or remember, without alarm, your fellowship in their crimes? Are such men the companions, with whom you would choose to go to judgment? the friends with whom you would spend the ages of eternity? Come out then from among them, that ye be not partakers of their plagues. Refrain from them, pass by them, and turn away; for he that walketh with the wise, shall be wiser; but the companion of fools, shall be destroyed.

## ANTI-DUELLING ASSOCIATION.



*New-York, Aug. 8, 1809.*

**A**GREEABLY to public notice, a large number of respectable citizens met at the North Dutch Church, this day, to receive the report of a committee appointed at a former meeting, relative to the adoption of measures for the suppression of duelling.

Hon. JOHN BROOME, Esq. in the Chair.

Col. LEBBEUS LOOMIS, Secretary.

The following plan was reported by the committee, and unanimously adopted, viz.

“ WE, whose names are hereunto subscribed, viewing, with alarm, the increase of the practice of Duelling; desirous of opposing to its further prevalence the strongest lawful resistance; and persuaded that a proper use of the *Right of Suffrage* will have a powerful effect in discountenancing and banishing it; do hereby unite ourselves in an Association, to be called the

### ANTI-DUELLING ASSOCIATION OF NEW-YORK:

And do, by our signatures hereunto annexed, solemnly pledge ourselves to each other, not to vote at any Election for any man, who, from current fame, or our own private conviction, we shall believe to have sent, accepted, or carried a Challenge to fight a Duel; or to have been in any wise concerned in promoting a Duel, or acting as Second or Surgeon therein, after the date hereof.

“ For the better attaining the object of this Association, the affairs thereof shall be conducted by a Committee of —; with a President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary, chosen by themselves, out of their own number. —members shall form a quorum.

“ Simple subscription to the above agreement, without regard of religious or political connexion, shall constitute membership in this Association.

“ The subscribers shall be convened in general meeting, whenever the committee shall judge it necessary.”



The committee also reported an Address to the Electors of this State, which was in like manner agreed to.

On motion,

*Resolved*, That a committee of twenty-one be appointed to procure subscriptions to the agreement now adopted, to fill up the blanks therein\*, and to prepare a list of persons proper to compose the standing committee of the association: and report the same to a meeting of the subscribing electors as soon as possible.

*Resolved*, That the committee appointed, cause the proceedings of this meeting to be published.

*By order of the Meeting,*

JOHN BROOME, Chairman.

LEBBEUS LOOMIS, Secretary.

\* The 1st blank has been filled by the Committee with fifty, and the 2d with fifteen.

*The following is the Address.*

## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK,

A number of your fellow-citizens solicit your attention to a subject of great and common interest. They address you not as adherents to any political or ecclesiastical party; but as men who abhor that atheism which rejects the authority and government of God—as citizens who feel the importance of making the law respected; and who know that the impunity of crime tends to destroy both public order and private happiness, with all the security of property, liberty, and life—as friends, brothers, fathers of families, to whom the social charities are sacred; and who can never hold cheap the blood of such as are united to them in the tenderest ties of amity, of nature, and of love. They call upon you to consider and resist the prevalence of a crime which strikes at you in all these relations; which has hitherto eluded, but too successfully, the several efforts to suppress it; and which, emboldened by past impunity, threatens to leave nothing safe of all that is venerable and valuable in human life—the crime of DUELLING.

They need not prove the absurdity and atrocity of a practice which cannot reckon among its advocates a single wise or good man. Few, even of the abandoned, venture to apologize for it upon any other principle than this, that “it is a means, however bad, which the state of society renders necessary for the protection of person and character; and that if one should not resent an insult by calling out its author, or should decline a challenge from another, he would become an object of universal contempt, liable to the meanest affronts, and incapable of retaining his place among men of dignity and spirit. Briefly, that PUBLIC OPINION, which regulates private honour, is in favour of Duelling, and compels one to sacrifice his reason, his conscience, and his wishes, to the respectability of his social standing.”

Thus the duellist, assuming it as fact, that he is to be rewarded with the approbation of the community, flies to his weapons of death; sates his revenge with blood; and produces PUBLIC OPINION as the warrant for his murders.

On the *morality* of this doctrine it would be superfluous to comment. There can be but one judgment pronounced upon it by all who recognize the distinction between right and wrong, as originating in a higher source than human custom. But if the allegation of fact is correct; if the duellist has rightly estimated the public opinion; if it is true that the American people look with satisfaction upon deeds which fill every virtuous mind with horror and dismay, then is our condition dreadful indeed.

We cannot submit to such a libel upon the understanding and the morals of this nation. Public opinion is merely the collective opinion of individuals. To be known, it must be expressed. And when, where, how, has it been expressed in *favour of duelling*? Let the man be produced who has, from principle, refused either to give or accept a challenge, and has been pursued by public reprobation!

The true expression of public opinion is to be sought in the religion of the land; in its laws; and in the conversation of its inhabitants.

The religion of the land is decisive; that religion which is received by the people of the United States as of divine authority, and which has interdicted not only the matured act, but all incitements to the commission of it.

The laws of the land are decisive. They speak death to the man who kills another in a duel. They speak degradation and infamy to every one who, in any manner, assists in a duel. But the laws are merciful.—They will not allow of any avoidable risk of punishing the innocent. And the guilty, availing himself of their precaution, and of the facility of escape created by different jurisdictions, eludes their blow, and in the very act of shrinking from this expression of the public will, pleads *public opinion* in his own vindication!

The private circle is decisive. Go through the State from house to house—number the patrons of duelling; and when you have found them one in a thousand of our independent electors, begin to speak of their opinion. Shall we, then, hear that our opinions *collectively* are in diametrical contradiction to our opinions *separately*? And that the public *applauds* a practice which every one who contributes to make up that public, a handful of the desperate excepted, pronounces to be *senseless* and *wicked*? Yet strong as the facts are; full, peremptory, solemn and habitual as are the expressions of public opinion *against* duelling, without one solitary expression in its favour, this baneful practice, the offspring of barbarous manners, and bloody passions, is still fathered upon *public opinion*! And, what is deeply alarming, gains rapidly among our citizens—gains, in opposition to all the expostulations of reason, and all the sanctions of religion; in opposition to the rebuke of the law; to the testimony of the wise and good; to the protestations of common humanity; to the tears of the widow, and the sorrows of the orphan; to the agonies of a father's bosom, and the yearnings of a mother's bowels; to all that is affecting in this world, and all that is tremendous in the world to come!

Are we fathers? Are we brothers? Are we citizens? Are we men? And shall we permit a crime, the reproach of our land and the scourge of our peace, to stalk openly and impudently through our streets? Are we to tremble every hour of our lives, lest a brother or a son, on whom rest our fairest hopes, cross our threshold in the morning to be brought back, at noon, a victim to that Moloch—modern honour; and as the sword passes through our souls, to be told, that we invited its point, and bribed the assassin, by our own complacency in his character?

But what shall be done? Reason has spoken, and she is disregarded. Religion has spoken, and she is mocked. The laws have spoken, and they are defied. Humanity has spoken, and she is insulted. This is unhappily true. One measure, however, still remains. A measure simple, digni-

fied, and probably more effectual than any which has been tried hitherto. It is, in the *elective franchise*. The free-men of this state have only to *refuse their countenance and their VOTE at the elections to every man who shall hercafter be engaged, either as principal or accessory, in a duel, or in any attempt to promote one*. As the utmost art is used by offenders in this way to frustrate the law by rendering the requisite proof impossible, nothing more is necessary to cut them off from the benefit of their ill-gotten impunity, than to make *current report*, or one's *private persuasion*, by what means soever obtained, the ground of withholding one's vote.

That the influence of such a determination, if generally adopted and acted upon, would be very great, cannot admit of a doubt. The only plausible objections are the two following:

1. That a Judgment founded upon presumptive proof, such as common rumour, or an article in the public prints, might condemn an innocent man; and

2. That the measure recommended may interfere with the freedom of elections.

Upon the first objection it is sufficient to remark, that should the case even occur, that a candidate for office should fail in his election from an unjust suspicion of his having been concerned in a duel, it would be still much better that an individual should be kept out of an office to which he has no right but the people's gift, than that an atrocious crime should go longer without coercion. The injury, if any, would flow, not from the *vote*, but from the suspicion which existed *prior* to it, and therefore could be no way occasioned by it.

But such a case is so extremely improbable, as not to be of any weight in the contemplation of a grand social reform. Among all those to whom a general and permanent suspicion has attached on this subject, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to point out an instance of mistake. And should a mistake happen hereafter, the person accused,

knowing that the charge, if believed, is to shut him out from the people's honours, will not be slow in repelling it, and rescuing his character from unmerited odium.

With regard to the second objection—Instead of interfering with the right of election, the expedient proposed is founded upon the broadest and freest exercise of that right. It is the prerogative of every elector to give or to deny his vote to any candidate for any reason which to himself is satisfactory; or for no other reason than his own choice. He enjoys a control over his own vote which no man nor body of men may question. And as he may give or refuse it to whomsoever he pleases at the time of election, so he is at perfect liberty to declare before hand, what causes shall govern him in its application.

While the measure proposed does in no manner invade the freedom of election, it is recommended by the most forcible motives of public utility and virtue.

The class of avowed duellists is too small to impoverish the councils or offices of the state by their absence. Nothing will be lost by leaving them out.

The intended remedy against their inroads upon society, addresses itself to the very principle on which they profess to build their practice—a sense of honour. Close up the avenues to public confidence: Let it be heard, and seen, and felt, that Duelling and Duellists are infamous, and their plea is gone. If after this, any of our citizens should persist in the practice, they will convict themselves, in the face of heaven and earth, of fighting from the impulse of ferocious malignity and thirst of blood.

The political power of the people will be arranged on the side of individual virtue, of domestic happiness, and of public morals.

Many an unhappy man, who would otherwise be hurried away by notions of false honour, and the dread of open scorn, will be preserved to himself, his family, and his country.

The stream of public opinion, thus efficaciously turned against a crime of frequent occurrence and the blackest dye,

will obliterate the reproach of our name, and prevent the accumulation of both guilt and suffering.

As no retrospect is designed—what is past being considered as past—an opportunity will be given to such as may have been unwillingly drawn into duels, to declare themselves in the cause of their convictions and of truth.

Such, fellow-citizens, are the sentiments which have given rise to the *Anti-Duelling Association of New-York*.—You are earnestly entreated to join in a general and solemn resolution never to confide the interest of your families and your country to the hands of men, who, by the future commission of the crime of duelling, shall prove that they neither fear God nor regard man. Such a resolution will refute the slander that your opinions are really favourable to their folly and their violence. It will put away from you, as individuals, if faithfully kept, the guilt of blood. It will be as beneficial to the community as it will be consolatory to yourselves. It will speak to offenders in a tone which they will not dare to despise. And if this magnanimous conduct will not furnish an example, no example is ever to be furnished in the course of human things, that the voice of the people is the voice of God!

*By order of the Meeting,*

JOHN BROOME, Chairman.

LEBBEUS LOOMIS, Secretary.

*New-York, August 8th, 1809.*







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